

LDI Good Practice Guides:
'Blackboard Student User Guide'

Version Date: July 2008

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Blackboard Student User Guide



Introduction

Blackboard is a Web-based Virtual Learning Environment which allows you to access learning material from any computer with internet access. It enables students to continue their learning activities, collaborate and access resources away from the lecture room.

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Before you start

To access Blackboard you must have a PC running Windows NT4, 95, 98, 2000, XP or Vista or a Macintosh. You must also have either Internet Explorer or Netscape Navigator 4.0 or above.

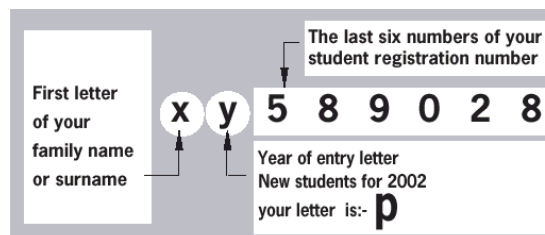
Username and Passwords

In order for you to access Blackboard you will need a username and password. You can work this out in the following way.

Your username is made up from:

- Your family name initial letter
- Your year of entry denoted by a single letter
- The last six digits of your student registration number

Now work out your own username as shown below:-



Password

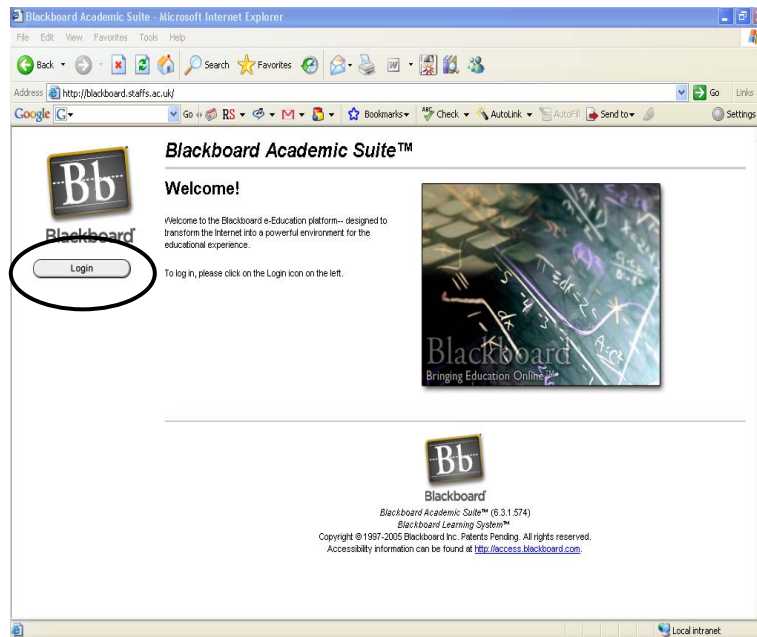
Your initial password is your date of birth, typed as six numbers with no spaces e.g. 201082

How do I access Blackboard?

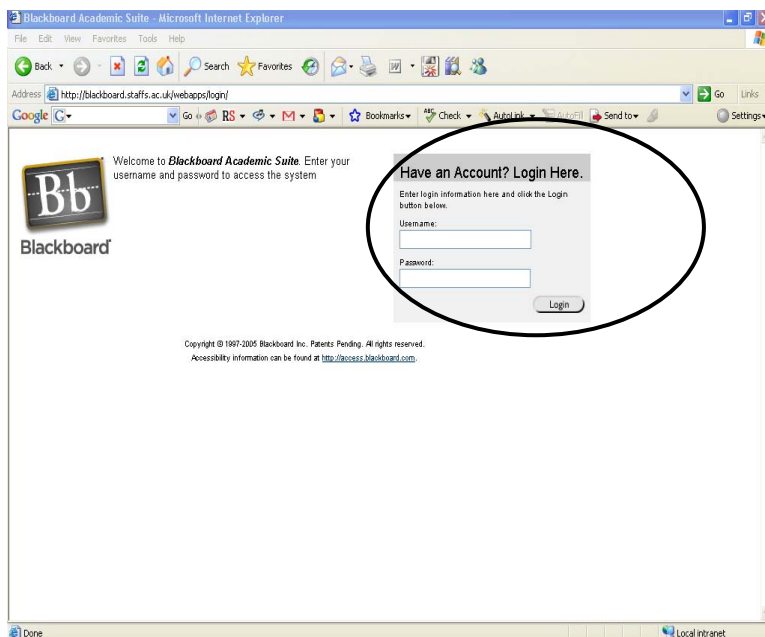
1. Start your web browser.
2. Carefully type in the following address, which will take you to

<http://blackboard.staffs.ac.uk>

3. Click on the **Login** button.



4. Now enter your username and password in the appropriate boxes and click the **Login** button once more.



Note: to exit Blackboard, when logged in, click **Logout** at top right of the screen.

Getting to your Blackboard course

When you have entered your username and password correctly you will then enter the system. By default, Blackboard opens on the Welcome page as shown below

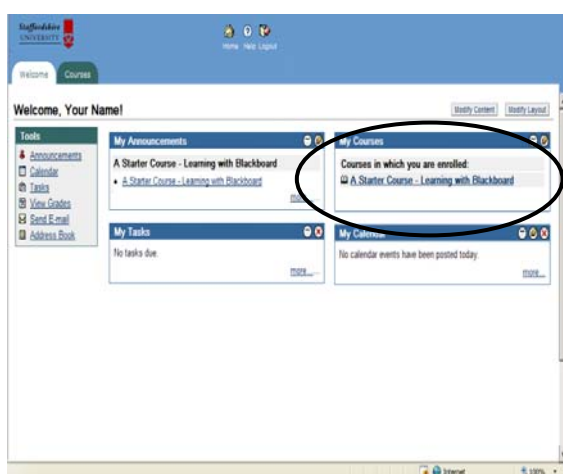
For those of you that are technically proficient, follow the instructions to the right for a quick access guide to your course. Otherwise for a more detailed guide, continue working through this document.

The **Welcome** page has a number of different areas: **My Courses**; **My Announcements**; **My Calendar**; **My Tasks** and also **Tools**. More information on these areas and the user interface appears later in the section “**Getting more out of Blackboard**”.

Quick access guide to your BB course

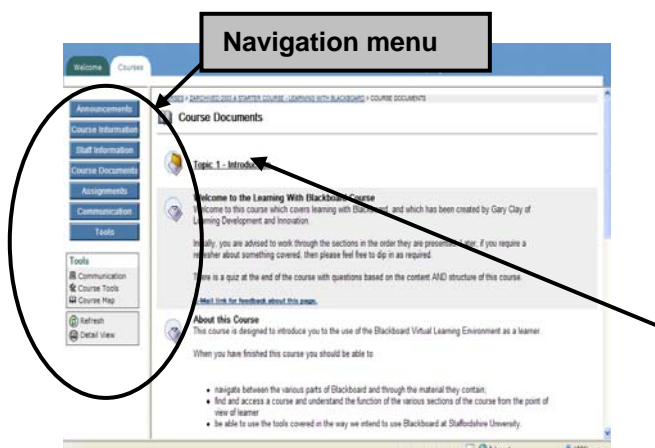
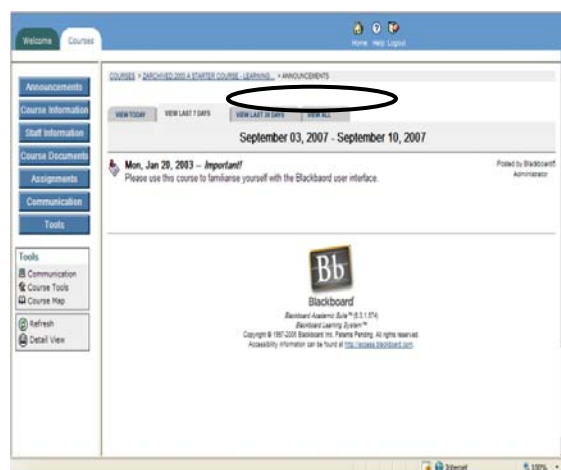
1. Click on the course listed under **My Courses** you wish to access.
2. Click on **Course Documents**.
3. Navigate your way through the folders containing the course activities.

Welcome page



The **My Courses** area lists all the courses in which you are participating, click on the name of the course you want to access.

When you enter a course you are presented with the Announcements section. As its name suggests, Announcements provides a means for your lecturer to communicate with you e.g. to alert you to important dates such as when an assignment is due, etc.



Course Documents

By clicking on the **Course Documents** button in the navigation menu on the left hand side, you will then be taken to the course activities for you to work through.

Note: you will always know what section you are in due to the header changing accordingly. For example, in this case Course Documents is displayed here.

Navigating your way through a course

To access the various areas in your Blackboard course, single click on a Navigation menu button. Below is the **Course Documents** section of a course. Depending on how the lecturer has structured the course you will see documents and/or folders.

This icon represents a folder which will contain documents or possibly more folders. Click on the underlined link to access it.

This icon represents a document for you to read. This may also contain attachments for you to download i.e. Word documents.

This icon represents a Web link. Click on the underlined blue link to access them.

The screenshot shows the Blackboard interface with a left-hand navigation menu and a main content area titled 'Course Documents'. The main area contains a folder icon labeled 'Topic 1 - Introduction' and a document icon labeled 'Welcome to the Learning With Blackboard Course'. Below the document icon is a paragraph of text and a blue underlined link: 'E-Mail link for feedback about this page.' There is also an 'About this Course' section with a list of bullet points.

After accessing the Course area you can return by clicking on the **Back** button on your Web Browser.

If at anytime you get lost in Blackboard there are a number of ways for you to return to where you started.

- Clicking on the **Welcome** tab will take you back to **Welcome page** from where you can select your course from the list once more.
- Or if you are lost within a folder you can use the navigation links, when present at the top of the right hand frame as shown below.

The example below illustrates that you are within a document called "**How do you know where you are?**" which is within a Folder Called "**Navigating within Blackboard courses**" which is located within the **Course Documents** area of your Blackboard module.

You can use this to keep track of where you are but also to jump back to any specific area by clicking on the blue underlined link.

Clicking here will take you back to **Announcement area**

Clicking here will take you back to the folder called **Navigating Within Blackboard Courses**

Clicking here will take you back to **Course List area**

Clicking here will take you back to the top level of the **Course Documents** area.

The diagram shows a breadcrumb trail: COURSES > ZARCHIVED:2003 A STARTER COURSE - LEARNING WITH BLACKBOARD > COURSE DOCUMENTS > NAVIGATING WITHIN BLACKBOARD COURSES > HOW DO YOU KNOW WHERE YOU ARE? Each link is blue and underlined. Arrows point from callout boxes to specific links: 'Announcement area' points to 'COURSES', 'Navigating Within Blackboard Courses' points to 'NAVIGATING WITHIN BLACKBOARD COURSES', 'Course List area' points to 'COURSE DOCUMENTS', and the top-level box points to 'COURSES'.

Getting more out of Blackboard

The User interface (Welcome screen)

The image consists of two screenshots of the Blackboard user interface, each with several callout boxes explaining different features.

Top Screenshot:

- My Announcements** – displays any announcements for the courses you are participating in that the tutor feels important.
- My Courses** – lists the courses on which you are enrolled.
- Tools** – Here you can add items to your calendar or tasks for completion, check grades, send email and change your password.
- My tasks** – Any tasks set by your lecturer or personal tasks set by yourself will be displayed here.
- My Calendar** – Any events such as assignment hand in dates etc that you have entered into your calendar will be displayed here on the appropriate day.

Bottom Screenshot:

- Modify Layout** – You can personalise page layout and page theme.
- Modify Content** – You can select items to appear on the Welcome page.

The screenshots show a navigation bar with 'Home', 'Help', and 'Logout' links. The 'Tools' menu includes 'Announcements', 'Calendar', 'Tasks', 'View Grades', 'Send E-mail', and 'Address Book'. The 'My Announcements' section shows a course 'A Starter Course - Learning with Blackboard'. The 'My Courses' section shows 'Courses in which you are enrolled: A Starter Course - Learning with Blackboard'. The 'My Tasks' section shows 'No tasks due.' The 'My Calendar' section shows 'No calendar events have been posted today.' The bottom screenshot also shows a 'Welcome, Your Name!' message and 'Modify Content' and 'Modify Layout' buttons.

Main Course Areas

Course Information	Module specific information, assessments, how the module works.
Staff Information	Details of your lecturers and other staff associated with the course.
Course Documents	This is the heart of the Blackboard course where all module-specific learning and teaching materials and activities can be found. The information is often divided into a series of folders/sections which may be structured e.g. on a weekly basis.
Assignments	This section is where you will find your assignments. Regulations concerning the assignments, and other assignment related material may be found here
Communication	Links to the communication tools, including Send Email, Discussion Board and Group Pages.
Tools	Allows access to Digital Drop Box (file exchange between yourself and the Lecturer,) My Grades, Calendar, User Manual and The Electric Blackboard amongst others.

Using the Discussion board

The discussion board allows an online discussion to take place among students and lecturers. Clicking the **Discussion Board** link in the **Communication** area of Blackboard will bring up a list of forums that your lecturer has created. In order to post a message you must first enter a forum; click on the name of the forum to enter it

1. Click the **Communication** button on the Blackboard navigation panel.

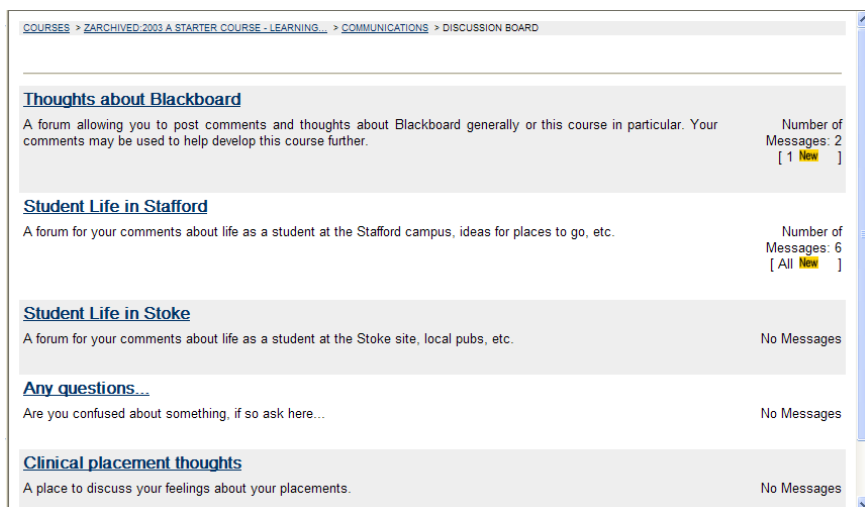


2. Click on the discussion board link.

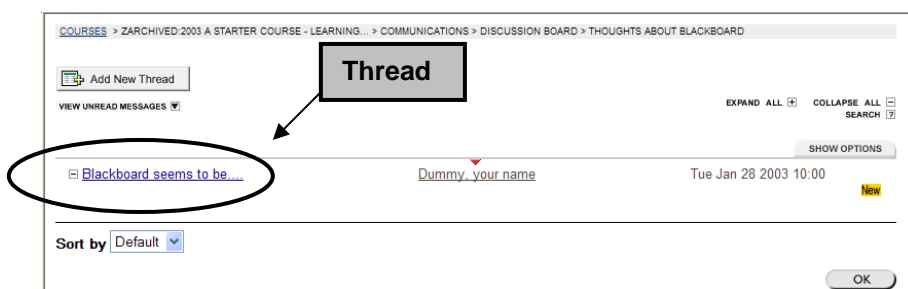


[Discussion Board](#)

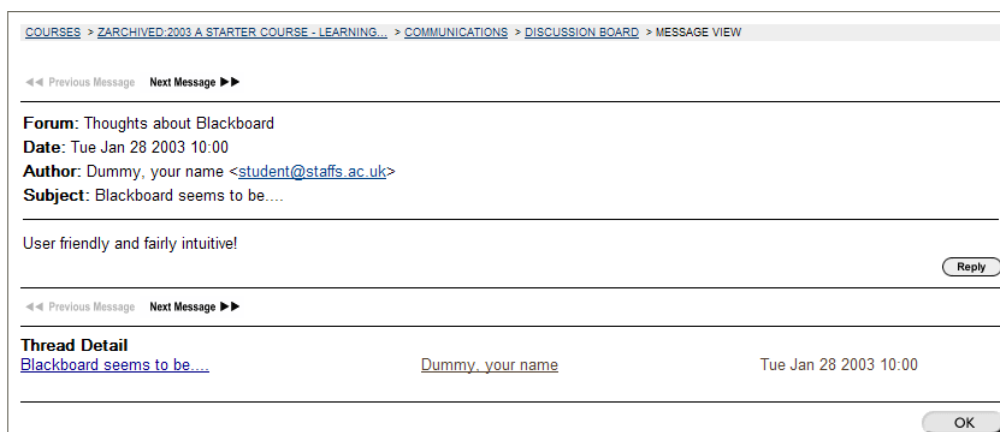
- You will now see a list of the forums. In the example shown there are three forums set up, **Thoughts about Blackboard**, **Student Life in Stoke** and **Student Life in Stafford**. Click on the forum you wish to enter.




- Once in the forum you will see a list of topics currently being discussed, these are called threads. To read the thread click on its title as shown below.



- When you have clicked on the thread you wish to view you are shown the discussion and further details such as the forum the thread belongs to, date, Author etc. If you feel you would like to respond to this thread click on the **Reply** button.



- When responding to a thread you will notice that the subject line is already completed for you as your comments will be relevant to that particular discussion. Fill in your response in the **Message:** field. Click the **Submit** button to post your response and return to the forum page

NB. To access a different forum click on the  button which takes you back to the list of available forums and click on the one you want to access

[COURSES](#) > [ZARCHIVED:2003 A STARTER COURSE - LEARNING...](#) > [COMMUNICATIONS](#) > [DISCUSSION BOARD](#) > [REPLY MESSAGE](#)


Response

Forum: Thoughts about Blackboard
Date: Tue Sep 11 2007 00:48
Author: Your Last Name, Your Name!

Subject:


Message


Normal 3 Times New Roman B I U




The discussion board is structured in a way that you can see which comment is relevant to which thread. Your reply will be indented under the first message that started the thread.

[COURSES](#) > [ZARCHIVED](#) **Original thread** [COMMUNICATIONS](#) > [DISCUSSION BOARD](#) > [THOUGHTS ABOUT BLACKBOARD](#)

 [VIEW UNREAD MESSAGES](#) [EXPAND ALL](#) [COLLAPSE ALL](#) [SEARCH](#) [SHOW OPTIONS](#)

 [Blackboard seems to be....](#) [Dummy, your name](#) Tue Jan 28 2003 10:00
[Re: Blackboard seems to be....](#) [Dummy, your name](#) **Tue Jan 28 2003 10:11** **New**

Sort by 

Response

To leave the **Discussion Board** just keep clicking **OK** to get back to the list of Communication tools or click a button in the left hand frame.

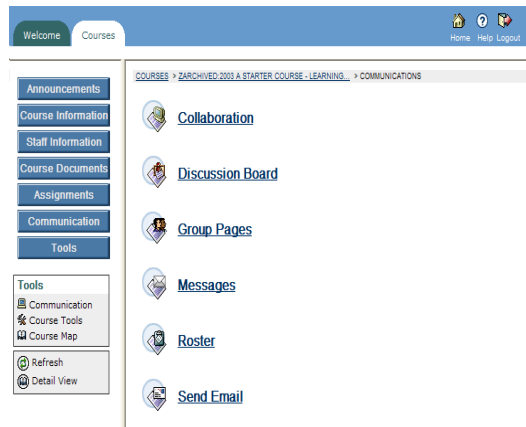
Sending email

Blackboard allows you to send e-mail to fellow students or to your Lecturer. Follow the steps below.

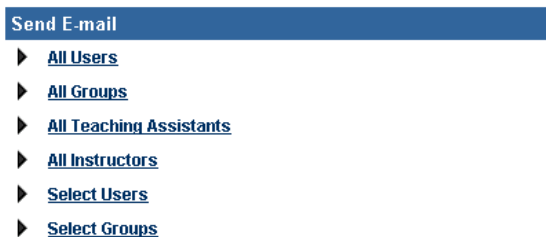
1. Click the **Communication** button on the Blackboard navigation panel.

Communication

2. Click on the **Send Email** link



3. You will then see this screen allowing you to select who you would like to send a message to. Any of these choices will display a screen with the **To:** field automatically filled in, or in the case of **Select Users** or **Select groups** check boxes to check off.



4. Below is an example of the screen for sending an email using the **Select Users** function. When you have filled in the Subject line and the message scroll to the bottom of the screen and click **Submit**. Note you can attach a document by clicking **Add** under **Add Attachments** then **Browse** to select the document and **Submit**.

You still must use your own email client to **READ** e-mail!

Blackboard can **SEND** e-mail but does not provide a facility for reading it.

Select Users

1 Recipients

To:

<input type="checkbox"/> Austin, Carol	<input type="checkbox"/> Bancroft, Gordon
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clark-Carter, David	<input type="checkbox"/> Clarke, Edward
<input type="checkbox"/> Clay, Gary	<input type="checkbox"/> Cleary, Stephen
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Clews, Sue	<input type="checkbox"/> Das Gupta, Mani
<input type="checkbox"/> David, Judy	<input type="checkbox"/> Dummy, LDC
<input type="checkbox"/> Dummy, Student	<input type="checkbox"/> Dummy, your name

2 Enter Message Details

From: student@staffs.ac.uk

Subject:

Message:

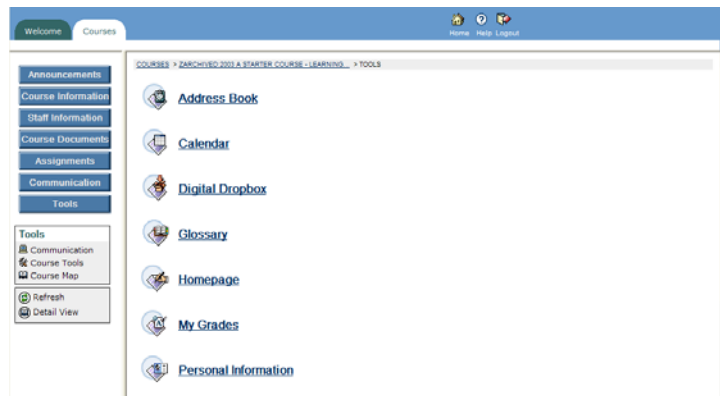
Changing your password

It is recommended when you first enter the system to change your password. To do this, follow the steps below.

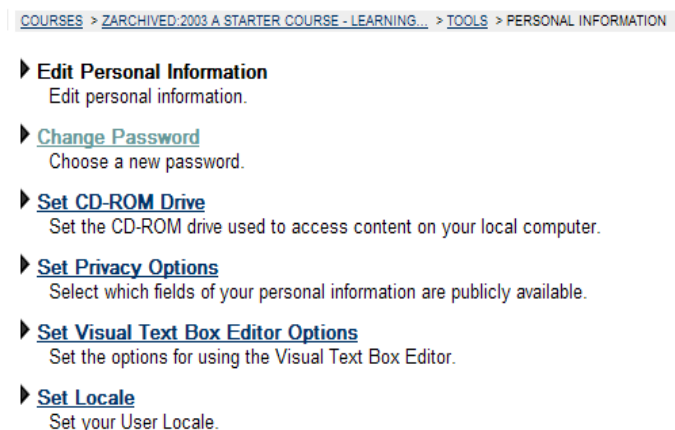
1. Click the **Tools** button on the Blackboard navigation panel.



2. Click on **Personal Information** link



3. Click on **Change Password**.



4. Carefully type in your new user name in the boxes as highlighted below.

1 Change Password

Complete this form to change your password.

*** Password:**

*** Verify Password:**

2 Submit

* - Required Field for Form Entry

Click "**Submit**" to finish. Click "**Cancel**" to abort this process.

Cancel

Submit

5. Click on the **Submit** button. Your password has now been changed.